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RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 0525
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 4146
RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA PRIORITY 8299
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG PRIORITY 6083
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA PRIORITY 0846
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE PRIORITY 1663
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [CH](#) [KS](#) [JA](#)
SUBJECT: ABE TRIP TO BEIJING AND SEOUL

Classified By: Charge d' Affaires, a.i. Joe Donovan. Reasons 1.4 (b, d).

¶1. (S) Summary: Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will hold talks with Chinese President Hu Jintao in Beijing on Sunday and with South Korean President Roh Moo Hyun in Seoul on Monday. MOFA Asia-Pacific Director General Kenichiro Sasae confirmed this during a telephone conversation with Charge on the evening of October 2. Abe may have left MOFA out of the loop by using the Prime Minister's Office to set up these talks. The Seoul leg of Abe's trip had been arranged directly between the Prime Minister's office and Seoul, according to Hakubun Shimomura, a close advisor to Abe. A senior Liberal Democratic Party of Japan (LDP) Diet member's staffer, however, claimed late Tuesday afternoon that it was still possible the Beijing trip would be canceled. However, DG Sasae later confirmed that the Abe visit to Beijing will be announced as scheduled and that North Korea's public statement that it will conduct a future nuclear test will now be a main agenda item. End Summary.

¶2. (S) MOFA Asia-Pacific Director General Kenichiro Sasae telephoned Charge late Monday evening to report that Prime Minister Abe will travel to Beijing and Seoul October 8-9 to hold bilateral talks. Sasae told Charge that the visit will be announced Wednesday morning (October 4). His message tracked with what Japanese DCM Saiki told Assistant Secretary Hill in Washington at approximately the same time. This will be the first Japan-PRC bilateral summit since former Prime Minister Koizumi's visit to Beijing in October 2001. The last Japan-South Korea summit was held last November.

MOFA Left Out?

¶3. (S) It appears Abe may have left MOFA out of the loop by using the Prime Minister's Office to set up these talks. A senior Liberal Democratic Party of Japan (LDP) Diet member's staffer, who has reported reliably in the past, told Embassy officials that Abe was dissatisfied with MOFA's handling of the negotiations with PRC Vice Minister Dai Bingguo last week. As a result, Abe turned to his newly appointed advisor Hiroshige Seko to handle discussions with Beijing. The staffer said Seko was not as successful in securing an

agreement with the PRC as he claimed to be when talking to Abe, and he specifically failed to get the PRC to accept an Abe visit without an assurance that Abe would not visit the Yasukuni Shrine in the future. The staffer said late Tuesday afternoon that it was still possible the Beijing trip would be canceled. She added that Abe's Cabinet Office Senior Vice Minister Hirasawa was planning to meet with PRC Ambassador Wang Yi to attempt to salvage the trip. The Seoul leg of Abe's trip had been arranged directly between the Prime Minister's office and Seoul, according to Hakubun Shimomura, another close advisor to Abe, in an appearance on Japanese television.

¶4. (C) These rumors notwithstanding, DG Sasae told Charge late on October 3 that the Abe trip to Beijing is finalized and that it will be announced as scheduled on October 4. Sasae added that North Korea's October 3 public statement that it will conduct a future nuclear test will be a major item on Abe's agenda. Sasae commented that we should not over react to what he termed North Korea's "brinkmanship" but at the same time the GOJ believed it was important to respond that a nuclear test would not be tolerated and urge the DPRK to return to the Six Party Talks.
DONOVAN